

Zezuru cosmology considers children to be pure and innocent but vulnerable to evil forces. Gifts from the ancestors, children are protected by them, though kin must bolster protection through appropriate cleansings and rituals. Children's vulnerability makes them targets for witchcraft or illness caused by ancestral spirits to get the family's attention if the family has not lived up to its social responsibilities or relations with the ancestors. Though children are aware of their vulnerability and have some fears, in most cases 'when the child has a healthy family and community structure and a firm sense of identity, the terror is seldom actualised' (p. 94). Reynolds emphasises the importance of establishing, re-establishing or strengthening a workable social identity and integrity of self (pp. 86, 95). True not just for children but for all patients, this is basic to how such therapy works. She devotes a chapter to dreams as one way of constructing identity. Creating a strong sense of identity and integrity of self and community around the children, which provides the context necessary for healing, requires knowledge and moral responsibility.

Perhaps Reynolds's most profound contribution is demonstrating that integrating the discourses on knowledge and morals is essential to understanding African healing. 'N'anga make a direct link between purity and the pursuit of knowledge.' Mastery of knowledge 'demands the development of will and responsibility' (p. 79). Zezuru believe that 'healers are selected by spirits because of the purity of their hearts' (p. 15). In my research, Ndebele healers claim that those they diagnose as called to become a healer must have a good or pure heart. They would not take on a student, who might use the knowledge for personal gain as opposed to the good of the community. Ndebele healers also believe they themselves must set a high standard of moral life. Reynolds finds that the integrity of community is critical to its well-being and that of its constituent individuals: without integrity the community's ethical code cracks and its discourse falls apart.

This is an extremely important work illustrating the connection between knowledge acquisition and moral discourse in African healing. Reynolds extends academic awareness of the relevance of strengthening children's sense of self and the ways that is done. Her focus on children, their exposure to war trauma as well as other types of evil, and conceptions of children guiding the way healers treat them is enough to make this an outstanding volume just on that basis alone.

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BENEDICT SCHUBERT, *Der Krieg und die Kirchen. Angola 1961–1991. Theologie in Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 3, Lucerne: Exodus, 1997, 344 pp., ISBN 3 905577 10 0.

The contribution of Christian missions and Churches to the making of modern Angola has been until recently analysed in a way that left it prey to some particularly strong myths. Schubert's book, a revised version of a Ph.D. thesis in theology presented at the University of Basel in 1996, is a powerful blow at these myths. At the same time, it sheds useful light on a period of Angola's history still largely obscure. Among the myths still subsisting about the stance of Christian missions and Churches in the former Portuguese colonies, that of their political role under colonial rule is no doubt the most tenacious: throughout the history of Portuguese colonialism, the myth goes, the Roman Catholic Church was the willing servant of Portuguese colonialism, whilst Protestant missions turned out to be the mothers of Angolan nationalism. Fortunately, the author, a Swiss Protestant pastor who worked in Angola from 1984 to 1992, provides a much more balanced view in three chapters (2–4) on the colonial period, the war of independence and the decolonisation conflict. Neither the Roman Catholic Church nor Protestant missions were

diametrically opposable homogeneous blocs: discordant voices within the Roman Catholic Church were heard and led to 'deviant' actions, especially after the Vatican II Council, and some Protestant missions (or missionaries) stood very much aside from the attitude they are generally deemed to have had, be it for political or theological reasons. According to another tenacious myth, Protestant missions were responsible for the division of the nationalist movement into three ethnically based parties. Schubert rejects the tendency to 'ethnacist' simplification which characterises so much of the literature on Angola, and his socio-theological analysis of the Church is all the more complex and revealing.

Schubert's argument on the civil war period (chapter 5) is dominated by a feeling of helplessness on the part of the Church: by its own stance in the political fray it prevented itself from influencing the course of the war and helping peace occur. The Catholic Church's hierarchy, albeit one of the only critical voices to be publicly heard through the bishops' regular pastoral letters, could not be taken really seriously because it never publicly took a position as to its controversial colonial past; the three main Protestant Churches (Methodist, Congregationalist and Baptist), for their part, were hindered by their social or political proximity to the belligerents (especially the Methodist Church because of the links its bishop, Emílio de Carvalho, and other members had with the MPLA, and the Congregational Church after some of its leaders and members joined UNITA in the bush), and they never formed a united front in favour of peace. The book ends with an interesting short chapter where the role of the Church in a context of protracted conflict is analysed from a more theological standpoint.

Of course, Schubert's book is probably too short to be exhaustive. One would wish, for instance, to have more information about the role and organisation of the Church in the areas under the control of UNITA, which the author cannot provide us with for lack of sources; and the analysis of the Protestant Churches focuses maybe too exclusively on the three 'historical' Churches despite a few fascinating pages on the religious proliferation (pp. 291–4). That said, no doubt this excellent book will be a reference for further studies on the topic, as much for the way Schubert clarifies important aspects of the colonial period as for the hypotheses he makes about the role of the Churches in the civil war. Besides, each chapter begins with a rather good—albeit obviously short—historical introduction, and the twenty-or-so pages on 'life in the People's Republic', somewhere between historical analysis and first-hand account, are particularly fascinating. Finally scholars without German might note that a Portuguese translation is due to come out in 1999.

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M. KEITH BOOKER, *The African Novel in English: an introduction*. Studies in African Literature, Oxford: James Currey, 1998, 227 pp., £12.95, ISBN 0 85255 552 0 paperback.

ATO QUAYSON, *Strategic Transformations in Nigerian Writing: orality and history in the work of Rev. Samuel Johnson, Amos Tutuola, Wole Soyinka and Ben Okri*. Oxford: James Currey, 1997, 180 pp., £40.00, ISBN 0 85255 544 X hard covers, £12.95, ISBN 0 85255 543 1 paperback.

Both these books are about African fiction in English and how to reach a fuller understanding of its goals, its informing vision, and the achievements of the writers. Ato Quayson and Keith Booker both come to their tasks with a deep knowledge of world literature and contemporary literary theory. However, while Ato Quayson